



Voices of the Family Child Care Workforce in New Jersey: Findings from a Statewide Survey of Providers

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September 2025





ABOUT THE
**RUTGERS CHILD CARE
RESEARCH COLLABORATIVE**

With funding and support from the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, the Center for Women and Work, the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, and the National Institute of Early Education Research at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey have joined together to form the Rutgers Child Care Research Collaborative for the purpose of conducting research and facilitating community conversations that develop a broad and comprehensive understanding of New Jersey's child care landscape. Our research aims to increase understanding about the needs and interests of parents in New Jersey, the supply and motivations of the child care workforce, and the capacity of the child care sector to meet demand for child care today and into the future within our diverse state.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, is part of a multi-center collaborative project focused on child care in New Jersey. The Heldrich Center works alongside the Center for Women and Work and the National Institute for Early Education Research at Rutgers University, with support and collaboration from the New Jersey Department of Children and Families. This report highlights findings from the Heldrich Center's survey of family child care (FCC) providers in New Jersey.

In 2024, the research team designed and deployed a survey for the FCC provider workforce in New Jersey. The survey captured FCC providers' (N=208) insights on key topic areas, including providers' experiences working in child care, motivations for entering and staying in the field, job satisfaction, work environment, career pathways, and suggestions for improving work in the child care field. These insights are critical in understanding the work dynamics of FCC providers, which constitute a segment of the child care workforce that has historically been understudied but plays a vital role in the provision of care within communities.

The Heldrich Center's survey derived key findings around four topic areas:

- Motivation, job satisfaction, and career pathways;
- Work characteristics;
- Education and training needs; and
- Recommendations for improvements that emerged from the research.

Some key highlights of these findings include the following insights:

- **FCC providers enjoy their work.** FCC providers are motivated by their love of children and commonly entered the child care field after their own experiences searching for child care, and to support other parents and families in their community. Over three quarters (81%) of FCC providers that participated in the survey identified as extremely or somewhat satisfied with their work.
- **Intentions to continue working as an FCC provider differed by years of experience.** While most respondents across experience levels want to continue working in child care, nearly 4 out of 10 (39%) established providers indicated some level of interest in leaving the field in comparison to only 3 out of 10 (29%) new providers. New providers, however, were more likely to express interest in working in a licensed child care center (55%) or public school (81%), in comparison to established providers (at 40% and 52%, respectively).
- **FCC providers indicate experiencing diverse challenges in operating their businesses.** The top three challenges cited by FCC providers were being able to take time off (40%), working with children with special needs (38%), and a lack of resources to support their business (38%). While these challenges speak to the unique work arrangements for FCC providers, they represent pain points in the day-to-day operations of their businesses.
- **Findings indicate that survey respondents face financial challenges.** Pay and benefits were consistently referenced as factors that negatively influenced FCC providers' level of satisfaction with their job, reasons why they would look for a new job in child care and/or the public school system, and recommendations for improving working conditions. More than four out of five FCC providers (84%) reported their total annual household income, including governmental assistance, gifts, and other income, to be less than \$75,000. Nearly 70% of respondents identified themselves as the head of their household, indicating that they are the primary financial provider. Most respondents rely on additional sources of family and public benefits, particularly for insurance.
- **FCC providers expressed interest in participating in education and training opportunities, particularly to support their work with children with special needs; however, they face obstacles in accessing learning opportunities.** FCC providers expressed interest in key training topics, including child development (52%), working with children with special needs (45%), working with children with behavioral issues (45%), and planning learning activities (44%). While 81% of survey respondents indicated that participating in additional training would benefit them, key barriers to participation were identified, such as inconvenient times for training (44%), the cost of training (31%), and the availability of training (25%).
- **Recommendations for improvements to working in the child care field reflected strong agreement among respondents.** FCC providers' three primary recommendations for improvements to the child care field were for the state to increase the pay for child care workers, to allow FCC providers to care for more children, and to provide state-sponsored health benefits, among others, to child care workers.

Based on these results, the research team offers three recommendations for consideration and further investigation. First, the state, working in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, could address FCC providers' interest in participating in additional educational and training opportunities that are accessible and reduce their barriers to participation. Second, the survey findings highlight a divergence in satisfaction and career intentions between new and established FCC providers,

suggesting an opportunity for the state to foster a more robust workforce pipeline of child care workers, across child care settings, thereby expanding the career supports and career pathways available to FCC providers. Third, the state could investigate possible interventions to more competitively compensate and provide benefits to FCC providers to ensure the existing workforce can continue in the field, as well as attract new FCC providers.

INTRODUCTION

The John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, is part of a multi-center collaborative project focused on child care in New Jersey and is working with the Center for Women and Work and the National Institute for Early Education Research at Rutgers University, with support and collaboration from the New Jersey Department of Children and Families. Through this work, the Heldrich Center is conducting an evaluation of the child care workforce through a multi-modal research approach. This research report shares findings from the Heldrich Center's survey research of registered family child care (FCC) providers in New Jersey.

The research goal of the survey is to highlight the voices of FCC providers, an understudied group in the landscape of child care provision. FCC providers, as part of a larger group of home-based child care options available to families, are a critical component of the care economy. National research suggests that nearly 40% of working mothers rely on home-based child care providers to meet their care needs (National Association for Family Child Care, 2024). With FCC providers playing a pivotal role in their communities, which are often rural, low-income, and Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities, more research is needed to understand providers' motivations, job satisfaction, and challenges, to be able to further support and respond to the needs of FCC providers in their work (National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance, 2020).

In 2024, the research team conducted a survey of FCC providers in New Jersey to better understand the current FCC provider landscape, with key questions about the providers' professional and personal motivations, potential barriers to providing high-quality care, and access to supportive services and training. This research highlights key insights that speak to FCC providers' motivations for entering and staying in the field and the factors that most contribute to their satisfaction and dissatisfaction working in child care. The research shares providers' estimations of their career pathways and the work characteristics that define the provision of FCC. In this research, FCC providers offer insights on their education and training needs, as well as share recommendations for how to improve working in child care in New Jersey. Derived from FCC providers' direct feedback, this research seeks to inform future policy decisions on the resources and supports needed for the continuation and expansion of the FCC provider landscape in New Jersey.

LITERATURE BACKGROUND

Child care access and affordability are struggles for working families across the United States (Davis & Connelly, 2005; Herbst & Barnow, 2008; Morrissey, 2020). The reliability and quality of child care are also key concerns for parents navigating choices in the child care ecosystem (Meyers & Jordan, 2006). Data from the 2016 Early Childhood Program Participation Survey, administered as part of the National Household Education Surveys Program, indicated that nearly half of all families with children under the age of five struggle to find child care that meets their needs (Schochet, 2019). This section of the report offers background literature and context about FCC providers' model of child care and their role in the child care ecosystem.

FCC, sometimes also referred to as family day care, is a model of care in which a provider offers child care for a small number of non-relative children in their private home and is registered by the state. FCCs fall under the umbrella term of home-based child care. They are distinct from more informal or personal child care arrangements, such as unregistered homes and family, friend, and neighbor care, in that they are registered with the state and are an option for the general public, not just families they know. FCC providers are registered business establishments and must comply with guidance set forth by their respective monitoring agencies, which may differ by state. While distinct from other home-based care arrangements, the FCC model of care also differs from center-based care. For example, FCCs offer small group sizes with children of different ages and developmental levels interacting on a regular basis in home-like learning environments. They often also offer care during non-traditional hours, including early mornings, late evenings, and overnights (Childcare.gov, n.d.).

Due to their more flexible design and orientation within the community, FCC providers fill gaps in the child care ecosystem. Often, FCC providers offer care for their own community members and serve as a critical support system for children and families, particularly those living in communities of color (National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance, 2020). Research suggests that FCC providers are sought after within rural communities for care for infants and toddlers, and for children with special needs, particularly those coming from Black and Latinx families and those living in homes with low incomes (HomeGrown, n.d.). FCC providers are also perceived as a critical resource to parents who work non-traditional hours, such as those engaged in shift work. A study by Child Care Aware of America (2019), based on data from six states (Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, Oregon, Washington, and Wisconsin), focused on the provision of child care during non-traditional hours; the study found that 63% of non-traditional hour child care was provided by FCC homes, in comparison to the 37% that was provided by centers. Considering this context, FCC providers constitute a critical community resource, serving diverse children and families in areas where there are few affordable and accessible care options, and thus allowing parents to engage in the labor force.

Much like the families they serve, there is significant racial and ethnic diversity across the FCC provider workforce. Research suggests that most FCC providers are women of color, particularly Black or Latina women (Kim et al., 2024; Jiang et al., 2021). In this way, FCC providers often share identity

with the children and families they serve, making FCC a first choice of families in search of child care that is culturally matched (Paredes et al., 2020). Research conducted by the Home-Based Child Care Supply and Quality project based on 2019 National Survey of Early Care and Education Home-Based Provider Survey data suggests, on a national scale, 31.5% of FCC providers speak languages other than English, and 18.5% immigrated to the United States (Schochet et al., 2022).

Another key component of FCC is that providers are not part of a larger establishment, but independently run their own businesses, often operating as sole proprietor small- or micro-businesses. Research from Advocates for Children of New Jersey suggests that the management of FCC provider businesses requires significant knowledge about small business operations, including having proficiency in Internet technology, billing, accounting, enrollment services, facilities maintenance, and human resources (Zydel, 2024). Other key facets of the operation of an FCC provider business include, but are not limited to, business management, technology use, marketing, creating a household budget, creating a business budget, managing a budget, and setting tuition rates (Zydel, 2024). These core competencies of operating a business are needed in conjunction with the skills to provide robust care for the children enrolled in the FCC provider's business. As Advocates for Children of New Jersey's research suggests, FCC providers need cross-disciplinary skills to navigate the management and day-to-day operation of their FCC business in compliance with state regulations.

Despite the growing evidence of the beneficial role of FCC providers as caregivers and entrepreneurs operating small businesses within their communities, FCC providers can struggle financially. While data on socioeconomic status and the use of public assistance programs is generalized to early childhood educators and not solely focused on FCC providers, data from the RAPID Survey Project at Stanford University showed in February 2022 that one in three child care providers reported experiencing hunger (RAPID, 2022). Research suggests that food insecurity concerns for early childhood education providers, inclusive of FCC and licensed center workers, were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and are more pronounced with certain sociodemographic groups, including Black and multiracial child care workers (Herman et al., 2024). Compounding concerns about food security, the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (2024) produced the Early Childhood Workforce Index, which found that in 2021, 43% of child care workers were utilizing at least one of four public safety net programs — Earned Income Tax Credit, Medicaid for Adults, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and Medicaid/Children's Health Insurance Program. This body of research highlights a financially insecure workforce whose wages from working in the child care field appear insufficient to make ends meet.

State policy initiatives related to improving child care options for parents are increasingly recognizing the need to support FCC providers. As FCC providers are often located in communities where child care options are limited, policymakers are considering FCC providers as a potential avenue to provide access to public prekindergarten (Weisenfeld et al., 2024). However, while the role FCCs play within their communities and the child care ecosystem is clear, there is growing concern over

the sustainability of the FCC provider model of child care. Claessens et al. (2024) conducted a study in Wisconsin focused on understanding why the supply of FCC providers has declined in recent decades and found that counties with growth in public prekindergarten enrollment experienced more substantial declines in FCC providers. The research also found that former FCC providers reported closing their businesses due to issues with regulations, low revenue, and the administrative burdens associated with remaining open (Claessens et al., 2024). Findings such as these contribute to a growing body of research aimed at understanding the dynamics and considerations fueling the FCC provider workforce's decisions to enter, remain, and exit the child care field.

METHODS

The Heldrich Center's study focuses on registered FCC providers in New Jersey. As outlined by the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Family Development (2024), a registered FCC provider in New Jersey cares for no more than five "non-resident" children, age 13 or younger, at one time in the provider's own home. This research focuses on registered FCC providers whose role in the care economy is significant in scope and under the purview of state regulation, making it possible for the research team to reach this population and assess their concerns, needs, and challenges to then offer empirical wisdom to inform improvement efforts and future investments.

▲ Survey Design

The research team designed a survey instrument (see Appendix A) for FCC providers to capture feedback and insights on key topic areas, including providers' experience working in child care, motivations for entering and staying in the field, job satisfaction, work environment, career pathways, and suggestions for improving work in the child care field. To inform the development of the survey for FCC providers, the research team reviewed relevant literature and previous national studies of the child care workforce. The research team also conducted a series of pre-survey focus groups with child care providers in New Jersey (Lin, 2024), and, as described in the next section on policy background, thoroughly reviewed the FCC policy landscape in New Jersey. The survey was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey and the New Jersey Department of Children and Families' Research Review Committee.

▲ Survey Recruitment and Administration

To reach FCC providers in New Jersey, the research team worked with the New Jersey Department of Children and Families and used the official state list of registered FCC providers from February 1, 2024 as the sampling frame for survey recruitment. The list is the universe of FCC providers and was comprised of 1,334 registered FCC providers. The research team's recruitment strategy included directly emailing FCC providers up to three times to encourage participation in the survey. Additionally, the research team received survey recruitment assistance from New Jersey's Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies.

The survey was deployed using Qualtrics, an online survey platform, and was fielded in May and June 2024. Survey respondents received an anonymous link to participate in the survey and were able to take the survey in either English or Spanish. For their participation, survey respondents received a \$50 incentive via email. The survey contained 61 questions and took approximately 30 minutes to complete. The data from the English and Spanish versions of the survey were combined and translated into English. The survey data were cleaned by two members of the research team.

▲ Survey Sample Descriptives

The survey collected 208 valid responses;¹ 131 respondents completed the survey in English and 77 completed it in Spanish. Considering the sample frame of 1,334 FCC providers, the survey yielded a 15.6% response rate. Survey responses included representation from each of the 21 counties in New Jersey.

Table 1 offers a breakdown of the demographic characteristics of survey respondents from the survey of FCC providers in New Jersey. Regarding sample composition, the data highlight a predominantly female (>94%) and racially diverse workforce, with 56% of respondents identifying as Hispanic or Latina. Survey respondents varied in their educational levels, with a minority of respondents having a postsecondary degree from a four-year institution (27%).

TABLE 1. Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents (N=208)

	N	Percent	Valid Percent
Survey Language			
English	131	63%	
Spanish	77	37%	
Gender*			
Female	>164	>82%	>94%
Male, other, or not shared	<10	<18%	<6%
Missing	34	16%	
Race			
Hispanic or Latina	96	46%	56%
Black or African American, non-Hispanic	47	23%	27%
White, non-Hispanic	18	9%	11%
Other**	10	5%	6%
Missing	37	18%	
Educational Attainment			
High school diploma or equivalent or less	68	33%	37%
Some college, associate degree or lower	67	32%	36%
Bachelor's degree or higher	50	24%	27%
Missing	23	11%	

* The exact numbers for gender are suppressed for confidentiality.

** Responses of Asian, Native American/Pacific Islander, and other were combined for confidentiality.

¹ A valid response required individuals to complete 30% of the survey.

Table 2 details the professional characteristics of the survey respondents and the care they provide in New Jersey. FCC providers were fairly split in their years of working as an FCC provider, with almost three fifths having five or more years of experience (58%). While New Jersey permits FCC providers to have five children in their care, survey respondents reported caring for a varying number of children from different age groups. Regarding the age dispersion of the children in care, close to two thirds (62%) of survey respondents reported caring for infants or toddlers, which is a population that is typically more challenging to find and for whom to provide care. FCC providers reported offering care arrangements beyond traditional business hours, with early morning (74%) and evening (69%) care most prominent.

TABLE 2. Care Characteristics of Survey Respondents (N=208)

Years of Working as an FCC Provider	Number	Percent
Five or fewer years	88	42%
Five or more years	120	58%
Number of Children in Care		
One to two	37	18%
Three to four	69	33%
Five or more	102	49%
Age of Children in Care		
Infants (0 to 18 months)	29	14%
Toddlers (18 to 30 months)	99	48%
2.5 to 4-years-old (30 to 48 months)	58	28%
4-years-old and up	22	11%
Hours of Care		
Only traditional business hours	47	23%
Outside of traditional business hours*	161	77%
Early morning	153	74%
Evening	143	69%
Weekend	43	21%
Overnight	39	19%

* Providers were able to select multiple types of care hours.

▲ Survey Analysis

Statistical analyses were conducted in Stata 18.0, a statistical software program. In addition to conducting descriptive statistics of variables for the full analytical sample, bivariate statistics were used to investigate the differences between newer and more experienced providers using the variable of years working as an FCC provider. Specifically, providers were divided into two groups:

- New providers (those having five or fewer years of experience working as an FCC provider), and
- Established providers (those having five or more years of experience working as an FCC provider).

With these subgroups, the research team could assess differences in the population for those with experience working in FCC prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 (established providers) and those who began working in FCC during and/or after the COVID-19 pandemic (new providers). When appropriate, t-tests and chi-square tests were used to test for differences between the two groups. While no differences were found for many of the survey questions, differences in experiences in career pathways and intentions, as well as some baseline differences, were notable.

Table 3 presents baseline characteristics of the new and established providers. One-tailed t-tests of means comparing new providers to established providers revealed statistically significant differences that match intuitive expectations. On average, new providers (mean = 43.3 years old) are 10 years younger than more established ones (mean = 53.2 years old). New providers also reside in slightly larger households with 3.7 people versus 3.4 people for established providers. As expected, new providers also have fewer years of experience working in the child care field, with 8.5 years in comparison to almost 16 years of experience among more established providers.

TABLE 3. Baseline Characteristics of Survey Respondents by FCC Experience Level

	New Providers (0 to 4 years of experience)		Established Providers (5+ years of experience)		Full Sample	
	Mean (standard deviation)	N	Mean (standard deviation)	N	Mean (standard deviation)	N
Age**	43.3 (10.4)	71	53.2 (12.3)	97	49.0 (12.5)	168
Household size*	3.7 (1.5)	70	3.4 (1.5)	96	3.6 (1.5)	166
Years of experience working in the child care field**	8.5 (8.7)	88	15.7 (9.1)	120	12.7 (9.6)	208

* p=0.10, **p<0.05

The survey contained three open-ended questions that were coded thematically by two members of the research team — respectively coding in English and Spanish — and were then reviewed and discussed by the full research team. This analysis process yielded full intercoder agreement, indicating consistency in the coding process. The research team used NVivo — a qualitative data analysis software package — to code the data and create new variables capturing the identified themes.

THE NEW JERSEY FAMILY CHILD CARE LANDSCAPE

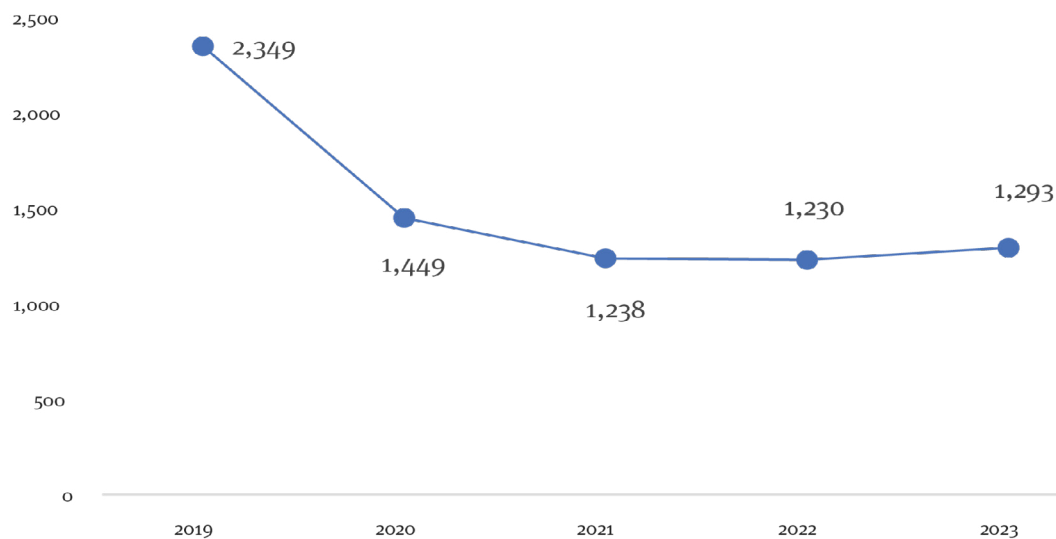
This section offers New Jersey-specific context for FCCs and explores FCC providers' arrangements and presence in the state, which informed the development and dissemination of the survey instrument for FCC providers. As previously stated, the arrangements of and regulations for FCC providers vary by state. The statutory authority for FCC registration is the Family Day Care Provider Registration Act, codified as New Jersey Statutes Annotated 30:5B-16 et seq. According to New Jersey Administrative Code 3A:54, New Jersey's FCC providers are permitted to care for up to five non-resident children aged 13 years and younger. New Jersey FCC providers can voluntarily register as a regulated child care provider with the state. There is significant incentive to become a registered provider, as it allows FCC providers to accept Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) benefits, meaning that they can serve more low-income families that qualify for the assistance program. To become a registered FCC provider with the FCC Sponsoring Organization/CCR&Rs, prospective applicants must engage in a comprehensive registration process and be subject to various regulatory standards in the operation of their home-based child care, including training and education curriculum and home and health safety measures. See Appendix B for more information on the registration process for FCC providers in New Jersey.

In recent years, there has been a notable change in the FCC provider landscape in New Jersey, with a significant decrease in the total number of registered FCC providers in the state. As seen in Figure 1, there is a visible downward trend in the number of FCC providers beginning with the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, which was then followed by a period of stabilization in the number of providers in more recent years. According to data from the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Family Development, in 2019, there were 2,349 registered FCC providers in New Jersey. In 2023, there were 1,293 registered FCC providers in the state.² While this number slightly increased to 1,334 FCC providers in 2024,³ the current number of FCC providers is approximately only 57% of what it was five years ago.

2 Numbers are subject to change per the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Family Development.

3 The data listed in Figure 1 were obtained from the New Jersey Department of Human Services' Division of Family Development website and cover the period from 2019 to 2023. The number (1,334) of providers in 2024 was from a single point in time that year and is not listed as the Division of Family Development's official count for 2024. This data point was obtained from the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, Office of Licensing, Child Care Licensing.

FIGURE 1. Registered Family Child Care Providers in New Jersey, 2019 to 2023

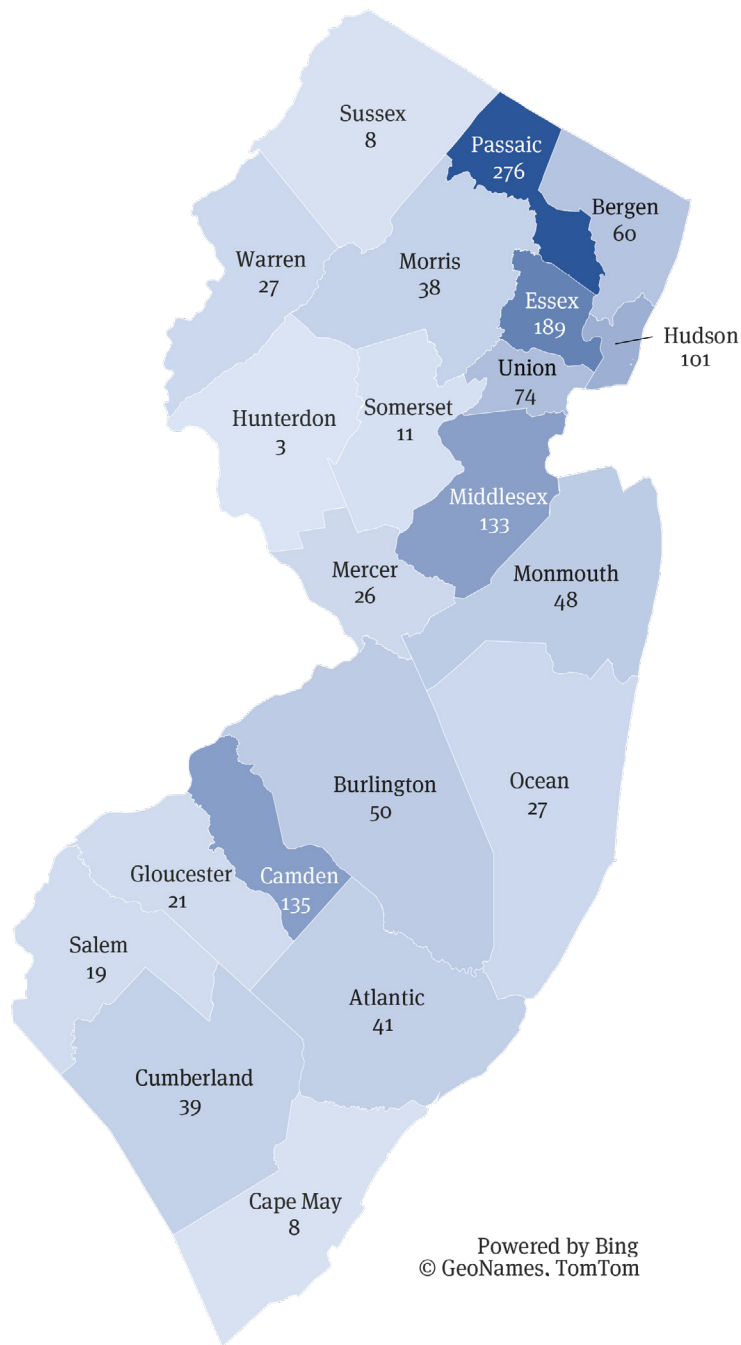


Source: State of New Jersey, Department of Human Services, Division of Family Development

The decrease in FCC providers is not unique to New Jersey, with the overall total of FCC providers in the United States seeing similar trends, starting long before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (Loewenberg, 2024). Data from the National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance (2020) indicate that over 90,000 FCC providers closed from 2005 to 2017 across the United States.

In regard to more recent trends, research from New America reports that across 39 states with available data, there were approximately 107,000 FCC providers in 2019 and only about 94,000 in 2023 (Loewenberg, 2024). The decrease in FCC providers in New Jersey has implications for the availability of accessible care across the state. Using 2024 data, Figure 2 highlights the dispersion of FCC providers throughout New Jersey.

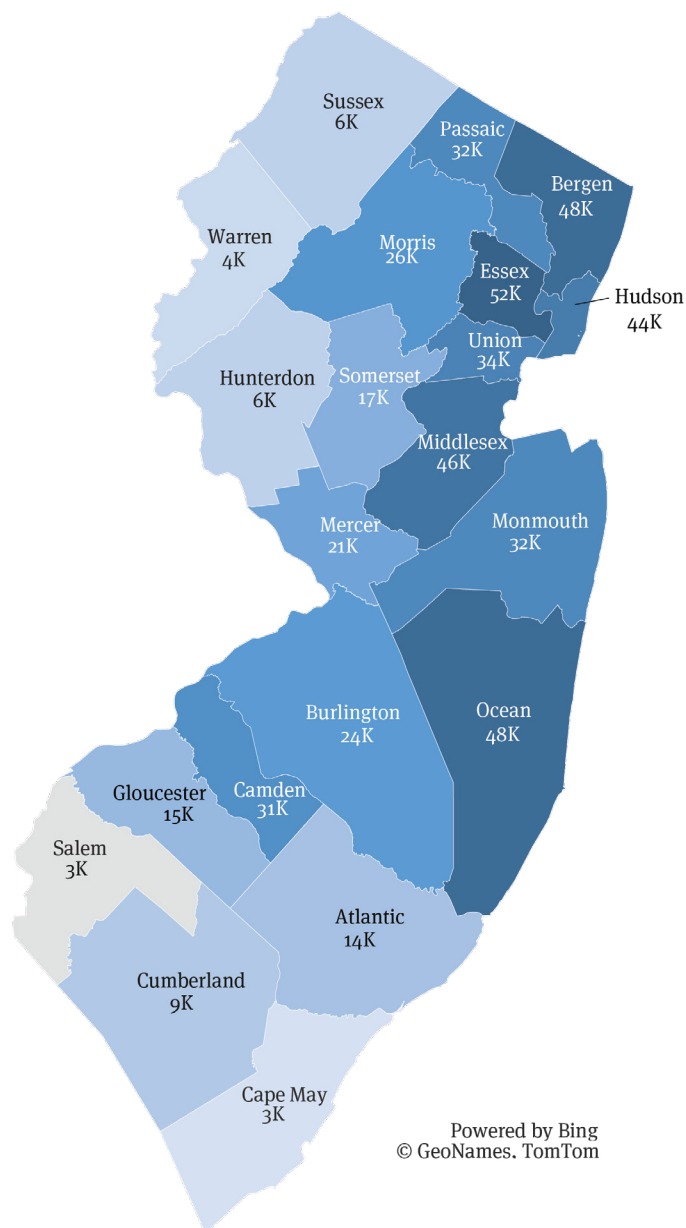
FIGURE 2. Number of Family Child Care Providers by County, 2024



Source: New Jersey Department of Children and Families Active Registered Family Child Care Providers, February 2024

For the purposes of comparison to the presence of FCC providers and to gauge child care needs across the state, Figure 3 highlights U.S. Census Bureau data from 2022, estimating the number of children under age five by county in New Jersey. Essex County had the highest concentration of children under age five, with nearly 52,000, versus less-populated counties such as Cape May and Salem counties, with approximately 3,000 children under the age of five.

FIGURE 3. Number of Children Under the Age of Five by County, 2022



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2022

Considering the demand for child care, as well as the recent decreases in the total number of FCC providers at both the state and national levels, there is growing concern over the stability of the child care provider landscape, as well as the United States' workforce at large, which is critically underpinned by the availability of accessible and affordable child care (Bromer et al., 2024). Given the research highlighting the important role FCC providers play in the ability of families, particularly families of color and low socioeconomic status, to access and maintain employment, this research sheds light on critical dynamics and considerations for FCC providers in New Jersey.

FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDER SURVEY FINDINGS

This section of the report presents survey results in four broad topics of interest:

- Motivation, job satisfaction, and career pathways;
- Work characteristics;
- Education and training needs; and
- Recommendations for improvements.

As described in the methods section, results related to the first topic revealed key differences in experiences between new versus more established FCC providers. As such, findings in this first topic section include comparisons of these two groups. Differences between the groups related to the other topics of interest were very small, if they existed at all. Thus, results for the full sample are presented for the other three topic areas.

▲ Family Child Care Providers' Motivation, Job Satisfaction, and Career Pathways by Level of Experience

The research team asked FCC providers about their motivations for working in child care, as well as their satisfaction with their work and the factors that most contribute to their level of satisfaction. The survey also inquired about FCC providers' assessment of the future of their work and career pathways.

In response to the open-ended survey question about their motivations for entering and continuing to work in child care, survey respondents cited three main reasons. The most prevalent motivation identified was individuals' love of children and working with them. Over a third of survey respondents (N=77) used the exact phrase, "I love children" in their response. The second most common motivation identified was the need for child care for their own child or for the child of a family member. About one quarter of respondents (N=51) shared the sentiment about searching for child care but encountering obstacles and/or challenges in finding care that met all their needs, particularly referencing constraints such as the cost of care and a desire to be with their children or grandchildren and still earn an income. To further illustrate this sentiment, providers shared the following statements:

"My own experience with child care when my children were young was a nightmare. I decided to be a stay-at-home mom and help others who depended on good childcare."

"When my youngest daughter was born, I couldn't find a provider who met the conditions I was looking for to care for my daughter" (translated from Spanish).

The third most common motivation, noted by approximately one quarter of survey respondents (N=49), was to help other parents and children through the provision of quality child care delivered in a safe and homelike environment, with some noting the particular importance of serving children with special needs.

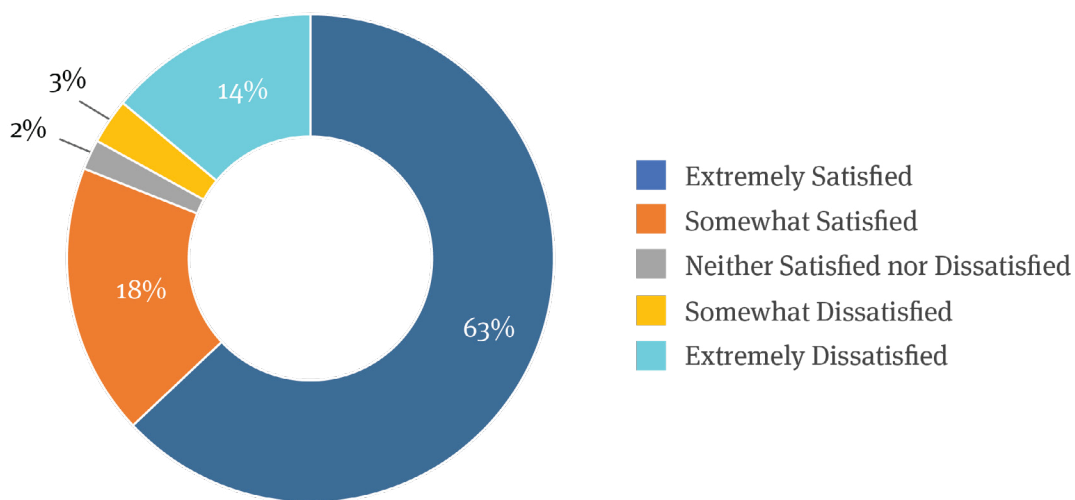
“Providing a care service to parents to ensure that their children are well cared for” (translated from Spanish).

“I love children, especially the disabled, as I have a disabled child of my own. I just feel as if it’s my calling.”

These prevailing motivations depict a driven workforce, motivated by a desire to work with children, provide care for their own loved ones, and serve their communities. While different motivations may have led providers to enter the child care workforce, survey respondents expressed sentiments that highlight their shared efforts to provide quality care to the children and families they serve.

Regarding job satisfaction, 81% of FCC providers who participated in the survey identified as extremely or somewhat satisfied with their work, as seen in Figure 4. Only 17% of respondents indicated dissatisfaction with their work.

FIGURE 4. FCC Provider Job Satisfaction



The research team further examined job satisfaction using the subgroup analysis to understand how satisfaction may vary in relation to experience working as an FCC provider. Table 4 summarizes the observed differences in job satisfaction between new and established providers.

TABLE 4. Job Satisfaction Subgroup Analysis (N=201)

	New Providers (less than five years) (N=84)	Established Providers (five or more years) (N=117)
Overall, how satisfied are you with your job?*	Valid Percent	Valid Percent
Extremely or somewhat satisfied	86.9%	79.5%
Somewhat or extremely dissatisfied	13.1%	20.5%

* One-sided t-test of proportions = 1.37, $p < 0.10$

The subgroup analysis indicates slightly greater job satisfaction with new providers (86.9%) as compared to established providers (79.5%), but the difference is only statistically significant at the 0.10 level, likely due to the small sample size. The survey identified the three main factors that were ranked the highest as contributing to job satisfaction. Nearly three quarters (70%) of respondents rated the ability to work from home as one of their top three factors contributing to their job satisfaction. This was followed by connection/impact with children (46%) and opportunities for learning and growth in child development (43%). The survey further investigated the three factors ranked highest as contributing to FCC providers' dissatisfaction. Seventy-three percent of survey respondents ranked benefits, such as health insurance and retirement accounts, as one of their top three factors having the biggest negative impact on their level of job satisfaction. The number of children in care (47%) and pay (37%) were also ranked by respondents in the top three factors most contributing to their job dissatisfaction. These factors, as well as the subgroup dynamics explored above, offer insights into the factors that most contribute to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and who may be experiencing dissatisfaction to a greater extent.

The survey also inquired about FCC providers' career plans and potential career pathways. Ninety-three percent (93%) of survey respondents indicated that they planned to continue working as a registered FCC provider in the next six months to one year. As illustrated in Table 5, new providers and established providers were similarly planning on continuing to work as FCC providers.

TABLE 5. Career Planning Subgroup Analysis (N=201)

	New Providers (less than five years) (N=86)	Established Providers (five or more years) (N=115)
Do you plan on continuing to work as an FCC in the next six months to one year?*	Valid Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	90.7%	93.9%

* t-test of proportions = -0.86, $p = 0.39$

While a majority of providers reported planning to continue working in FCC for the next year, the survey further inquired about respondents' interest in leaving the child care field as well as switching job settings within the child care field. When asked about their interest in leaving the child care field, new providers were less interested in leaving the field, as compared to established providers, though not a statistically significant difference. As seen in Table 6, almost three quarters of new providers (70.6%) indicated that they were not at all interested in leaving the child care field, while 61.3% of established providers had no interest in seeking employment outside of the field.

TABLE 6. Interest in Leaving Child Care Subgroup Analysis (N=196)

	New Providers (less than five years) (N=85)	Established Providers (five or more years) (N=111)
How interested are you in leaving the child care field?*	Valid Percent	Valid Percent
Extremely or very	9.4%	8.1%
Moderately or slightly	20.0%	30.6%
Not at all	70.6%	61.3%

* Chi-square (d.f.=2) = 2.83, p=0.24

The survey also explored the factors that would drive FCC providers to look for a new child care job to better understand respondents' motivations and/or priorities in their career planning and potential career pathways. Respondents reported the three most prevalent factors as:

1. To find a job with better benefits/insurance (46%),
2. To find a job that pays more (41%), and
3. To find a second job in addition to running their family FCC business current job (22%).

The survey data show that the three identified factors that would drive FCC providers to look for a new job are nearly the same as those identified as most contributing to job dissatisfaction.

When asked about their interest in working in a licensed child care center, a greater percentage of new providers expressed interest in leaving FCC to work in a licensed center, and the difference is statistically significant. Table 7 offers a more detailed breakdown of respondents' interest in working in a licensed child care center based on their status as a new or established provider. Over a third (35.4%) of new providers indicated their interest in working in a licensed center, as compared to 17.8% of established providers who were similarly interested. Relatedly, only 19% of new providers expressed having no interest in working in a licensed child care center, while 38.3% of established providers indicated having no interest.

TABLE 7. Interest in Working in a Licensed Child Care Center Subgroup Analysis (N=186)

	New Providers (less than five years) (N=79)	Established Providers (five or more years) (N=107)
Would you be interested in working in a licensed child care center?*	Valid Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	35.4%	17.8%
Depends	45.6%	43.9%
No	19.0%	38.3%

* Chi-square (d.f.=2) = 11.29, $p < 0.01$

These findings indicate that while most FCC providers are interested in continuing to work in the child care field, newer providers are much more interested in working in a licensed child care setting than established FCC providers. Relatedly, FCC providers were asked about their interest in working in public schools, which would be a more structured work arrangement, also defined by key benefits such as higher rates of pay and health insurance. Table 8 illustrates that a greater portion of new providers (14.8%) would take a job in the public school system as compared to established providers (11.2%). Similarly, nearly three fifths (59.8%) of established providers indicated that they would not take a job in the public school system, while 44.3% of new providers responded similarly. It is important to note, however, that though descriptively notable, the difference did not reach statistical significance due to the small sample size.

TABLE 8. Interest in Working in the Public School System Subgroup Analysis (N=186)

	New Providers (less than five years) (N=79)	Established Providers (five or more years) (N=107)
If you were offered a job in the public school system in New Jersey, would you leave your current job as an FCC to take it?*	Valid Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	14.8%	11.2%
Depends	40.5%	29.0%
No	44.3%	59.8%

* Chi-square (d.f.=2) = 4.40, $p = 0.11$

While the survey questions about career planning and potential career pathways were to gauge interest and estimations of future plans, similar proportions of new and established providers were actively pursuing a teaching certificate to teach in the public schools. Table 9 shows that approximately 21% of both new and established providers were pursuing a teaching certificate to be able to teach in public schools.

TABLE 9. Pursuit of a Teaching Certificate Subgroup Analysis (N=185)

	New Providers (less than five years) (N=79)	Established Providers (five or more years) (N=106)
Are you actively pursuing a teaching certificate to teach in the public schools?*	Valid Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	21.5%	20.8%

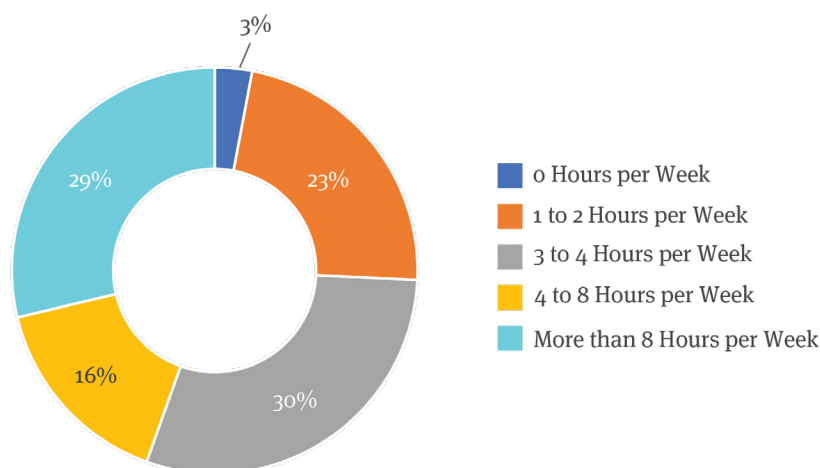
* t-test of proportions = 0.125, p=0.90

While FCC providers are unified in their motivations and pathways into the child care field, the survey findings suggest that career interests and pathways may diverge for new and established FCC providers, with new FCC providers statistically significantly more interested in transitioning to a licensed center. FCC providers are also more interested in working in a public school compared to more established providers, but this difference is only significant at the 0.10 level, and there is no difference in those actively pursuing a teaching certificate. The differences between subgroups within the survey sample suggest that different interventions and supports may be needed for new and established FCC providers to address the key topic areas of job satisfaction and retention.

▲ Work Characteristics for Family Child Care Providers

To understand the day-to-day operations, considerations, and challenges of FCC providers, the survey employed a series of questions about the conditions and characteristics of FCC providers' work and key decisions for the operation and management of FCC providers' businesses.

Survey respondents were asked about the average hours per week they spend on activities to manage the administration of their FCC business. Figure 5 highlights that 29% of respondents indicated that they spend more than eight hours per week on business administration, 46% noted spending between three and eight hours per week, and 26% shared spending between zero and two hours per week.

FIGURE 5. Hours per Week Spent on Activities to Manage the Administration of FCC Business

These data speak to the unique demands placed on FCC providers, in contrast to center-based educators, who are not responsible for business administration. The administrative demands of operating a business are a key consideration for FCC providers, requiring time, knowledge, and expertise to manage successfully.

When asked about the challenges of being an FCC provider, two out of every five respondents listed the following as one of their top three challenges:

- The ability to take time off (cited by 40% of respondents),
- A lack of resources to support their FCC business (38%), and
- Working with children with special needs (38%).

These identified challenges largely speak to the unique dynamics of work arrangements for FCC providers, particularly operating as sole proprietor, independent businesses. The topic of working with children with special needs will be further explored in the next section of this report.

Building upon perceived challenges, survey respondents were also asked to respond about the extent to which known workforce challenges were a major, minor, or not at all a challenge for them. About one third of respondents (33%) regarded finding time to pursue education and training as a major challenge. The next most prevalent major challenges were finding time for personal care and well-being (30%) and finding time in the workday to plan curriculum and do paperwork (25%). In this way, survey respondents discussed the different responsibilities that divide their time, making it challenging to balance their day-to-day operations with future and personal planning.

The survey asked about FCC providers' perceptions about pay and benefits, as well as their access to key benefits like health care. The survey findings depict a workforce that struggles financially, notably relying on additional sources of income and family and public benefits, particularly for insurance. Nearly 70% of respondents identified themselves as the head of their household, with only 3 in 10 respondents indicating that another member of their household was the primary financial provider. Fifteen percent (15%) of respondents also reported having another job to supplement their income. The majority of survey respondents had health, dental, and vision insurance; however, they did not have access to these benefits through their FCC business, but rather through another source. Most notably, more than four out of every five FCC providers (84%) reported their total annual household income, including governmental assistance, gifts, and other income, to be less than \$75,000. Reported across various questions in the survey, respondents consistently indicated that pay and benefits were challenges in their work, factors that negatively influenced their level of satisfaction with their job, reasons why they would look for a new job in child care and/or the public school system, and were prevailing sentiments in their recommendations for improving working conditions for child care workers.

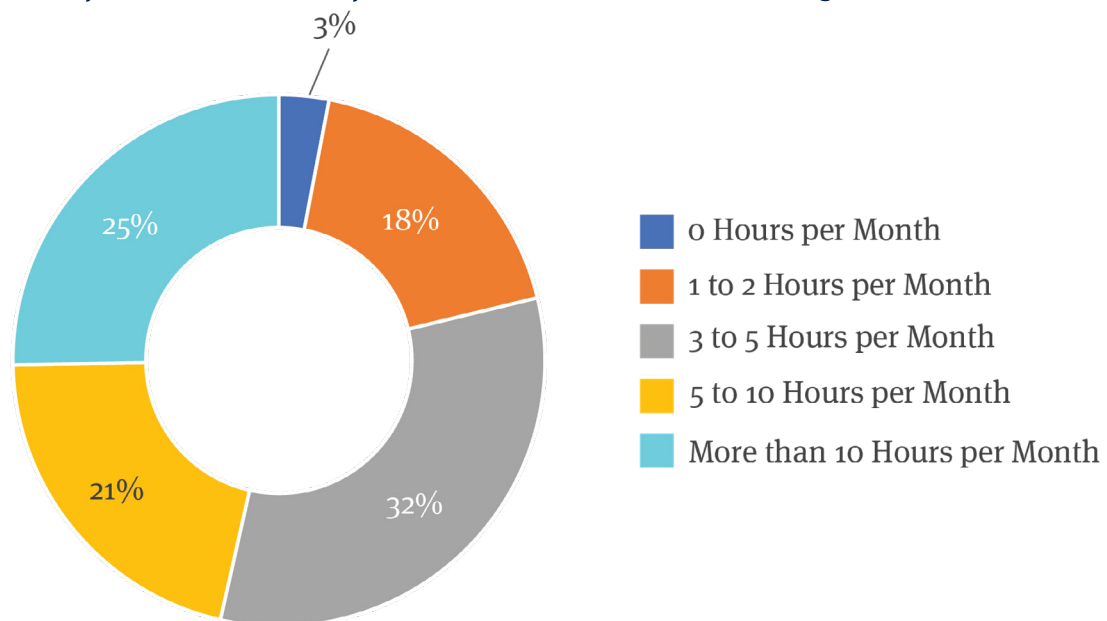
The demands of the FCC provider job are sizable, requiring individuals to have a diversity of skills with business administration and to wear many hats with the planning and provision of child care services. The survey findings suggest that the FCC workforce experiences a variety of challenges, inclusive of day-to-day operations difficulties, strains with time allocation and future planning, obstacles in making ends meet, and struggles to remain in business and employed in the child care workforce. Concerns with pay and benefits were highlighted throughout the survey findings, constituting a clear point of tension for the FCC provider workforce in New Jersey.

▲ Family Child Care Providers' Education and Training Needs

The survey also explored FCC providers' interest in participating in additional education and training, and inquired about the topics that providers felt would be most beneficial to them.

As depicted in Figure 6, survey respondents were asked to approximate the number of hours they spend per month on activities to improve their skills or gain new skills in working with children. About one third of respondents (32%) indicated that they spent 3 to 5 hours per month on skill development activities, while 25% noted spending more than 10 hours per month on skill development activities.

FIGURE 6. Hours Spent on Activities to Improve Skills or Gain New Skills in Working with Children



To understand the greater context about the nature of these skill development activities, survey respondents were asked about the types of development activities in which they had participated. Over four fifths of participants (84%) indicated participating in a workshop within the past 12 months. Half of the survey respondents (54%) noted attending a meeting of a professional organization, while 45% shared that they participated in coaching, mentoring, or ongoing consultation with a specialist. Lastly, 15% of respondents noted having enrolled in a course at a community college or four-year

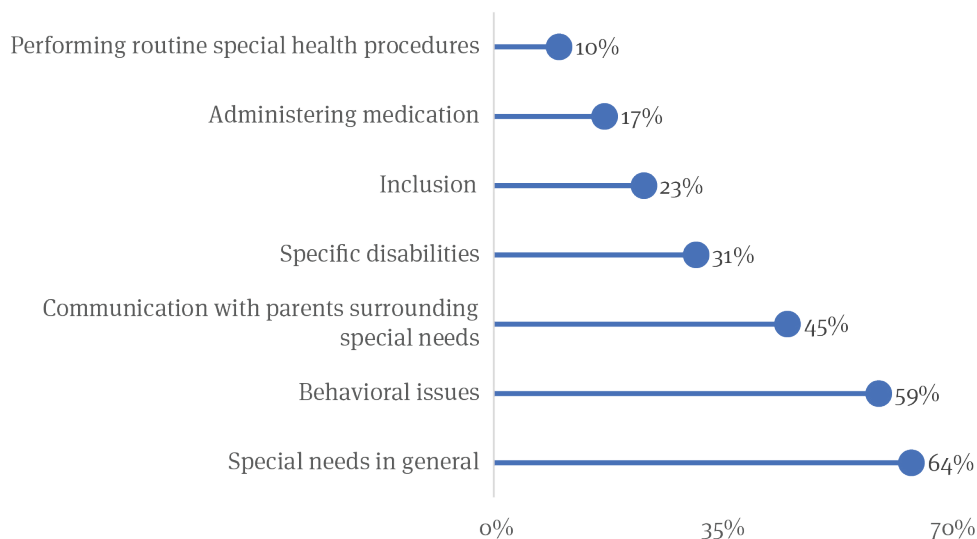
college/university relevant to their work with children. Survey respondents were also asked if the last time they participated in a skill development activity, whether they did so to fulfill a requirement. Two thirds of respondents (66%) indicated that their last skill development activity was completed to fulfill a requirement.

When asked whether they felt that additional training and/or certifications would benefit them in their work, 81% of respondents said yes. To garner more information about the topic areas most relevant to FCC providers for additional training, the survey asked respondents to rank their top three priorities for training. Child development was ranked in the top three by 52% of survey respondents, followed closely by working with children with special needs (45%), working with children with behavioral issues (45%), and planning learning activities (44%).

Based on the learnings from the research team's previous focus groups with child care providers, which informed the development of the survey instrument, researchers investigated the topic of needing additional training to work with children with special needs.

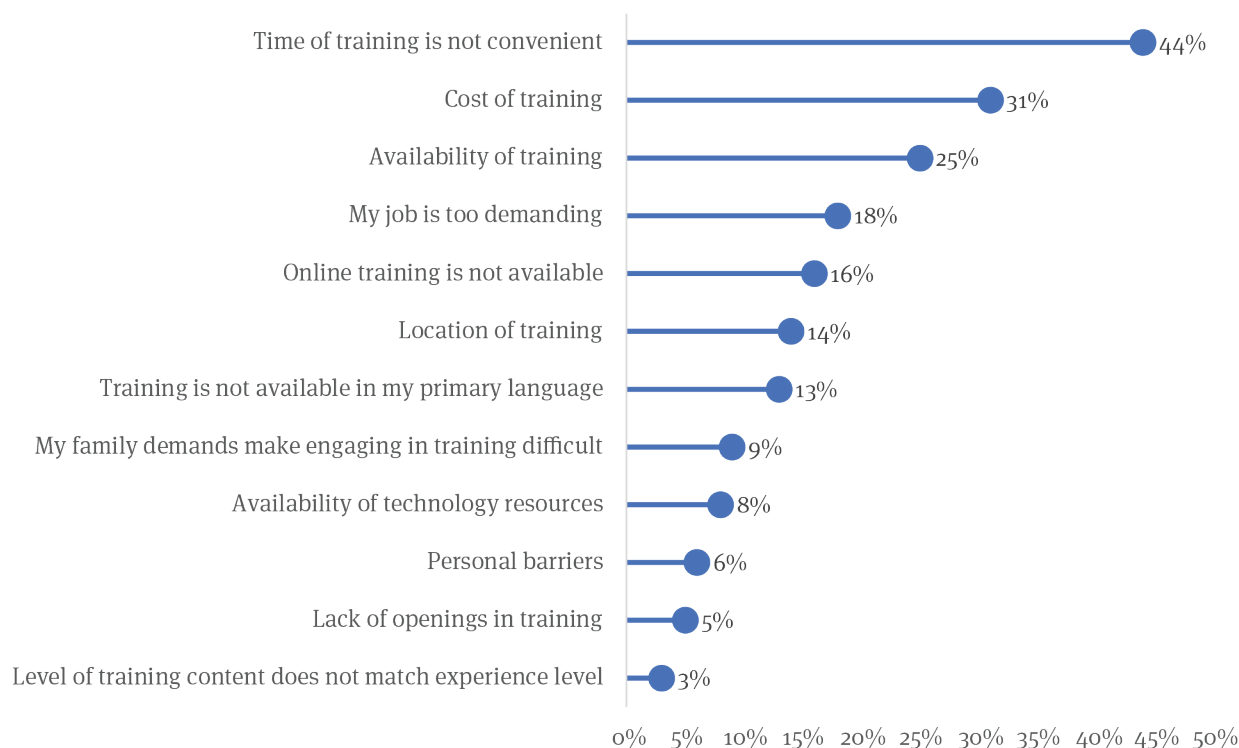
As seen in Figure 7, survey respondents noted that their top priorities for receiving specialized training were for special needs in general (64%), behavioral issues (59%), communication with parents surrounding special needs (45%), specific disabilities (31%), and inclusion (23%). A smaller percentage of respondents indicated a desire to learn how to administer medication (17%) and perform routine special health procedures (10%). These topic areas for additional training are relevant considering that 64% of survey respondents reported currently, or in the past, serving a child that they felt had special needs but did not have a diagnosis. While a majority of FCC providers agreed that parents were receptive to their concerns when they suspected a child might have a disability or special need (55%), many still felt that they encountered challenges when trying to appropriately provide care for that child. The four most challenging issues in appropriately accommodating children with special needs were identified as not having enough staff for the necessary supervision (37%), difficulties including children with special needs in all activities (29%), disruptions to other children (26%), and a lack of training (26%). As evidenced by previous research and within the responses to different questions throughout the survey, FCC providers expressed wanting to participate in additional specialized training to support their work with children with special needs.

FIGURE 7. Specialized Training Needs for Working with Children with Special Needs



While survey respondents indicated a clear interest in participating in additional education and training opportunities, barriers to participation persist. As shown in Figure 8, the most prevalent barriers preventing FCC providers from accessing training and learning opportunities were identified as inconvenient times for training (44%), the cost of training (31%), and the availability of training (25%).

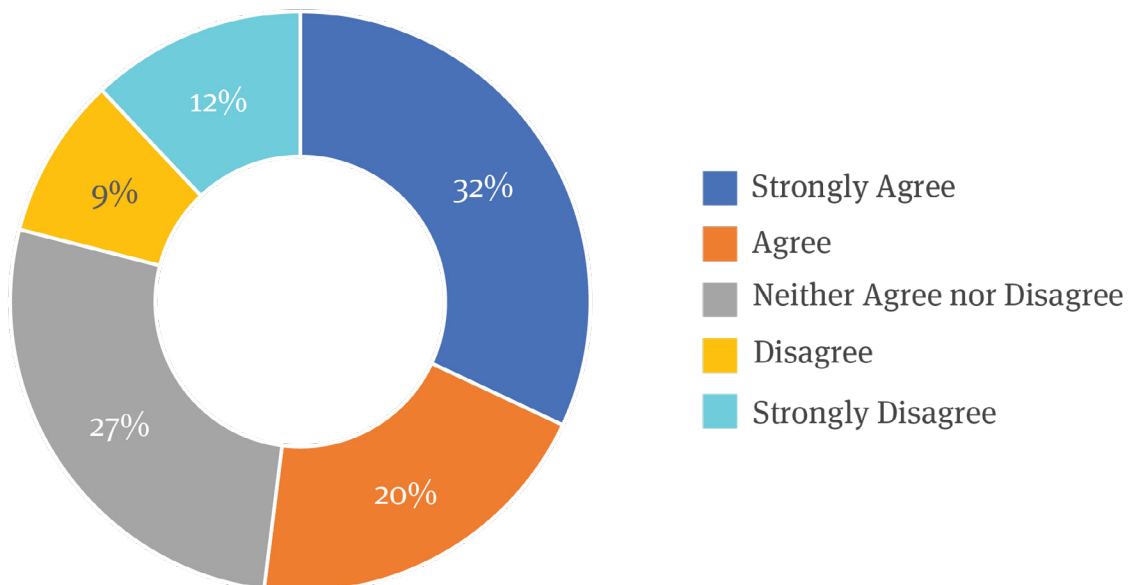
FIGURE 8. Barriers to Accessing Training or Learning Opportunities



These identified barriers suggest that FCC providers encounter logistical challenges when engaging in additional education and training opportunities. Relevant stakeholders could consider methods by which to reduce such barriers for FCC providers, potentially working in collaboration with local CCR&R agencies and community-based entities.

Respondents were asked a series of questions about furthering their education, and while over half of the survey respondents (52%) strongly agreed or agreed that they were interested in going back to school to further their education in the early childhood field or to get a certification, as seen in Figure 9, respondents were also wary of the obstacles and limitations associated with their educational pursuits.

FIGURE 9. Interest in Furthering Education



Fifty-seven percent (57%) of respondents agreed that it would cost too much to further their education or get a certification. A similar portion of respondents (57%) agreed that they did not have enough spare time to further their education or get a certification. Over one third (35%) of participants agreed with the statement that they did not know where to go to further their education or get a certificate. Lastly, 27% of respondents agreed that it was not worth their time and effort to further their education or get a certification, because the salary increase would be too small. In this way, survey respondents' interest in furthering their education was dampened by a multitude of perceived constraints.

The survey findings depict a workforce that is interested in participating in educational and learning opportunities to improve their skills or to gain new skills, and open to enrolling in educational and certification programs. Key topic areas of interest for additional training are child development and working with children with special needs and behavioral issues. Respondents further shared the specific training topics of interest for specialized training to better serve children with special needs.

While these topics are of interest, survey respondents also conveyed the existence of significant barriers that they experience when pursuing educational opportunities, thereby limiting their ability to further their educational and credential attainment.

▲ Family Child Care Providers' Recommendations for Improvements

The survey included an open-ended question that asked FCC providers for their recommendations on what policymakers should prioritize to improve the working conditions for child care workers in New Jersey. While 139 respondents answered the question about how the state could improve the working conditions of the child care workforce, three primary suggestions emerged in the data. The most prevalent recommendation (N=54) was for the state to **increase the pay for child care workers**. Highlighted below are some quotes from the survey.

“Find a way to increase the pay. It’s such an important field both for the children and parents. However, in the current economy and with the high cost of living in New Jersey, it is very difficult to work in this field.”

“Increase salary to make it appealing to many.”

“The pay because most childcare workers spend their personal cash on supplies.”

“Provide more resources, paid help, and more money for child care, to improve child care space and educational supplies.”

As outlined above, the suggestions centered on increasing pay speak to the multifaceted benefits that FCC providers perceive stemming from the increase. FCC providers expressed that increasing the pay would make working in child care more sustainable for those already in the field, but also more attractive to potential workers. Given the state’s interest in increasing the number of available and active FCC providers, this suggestion bears consideration. Additionally, FCC providers highlighted increasing the pay to be able to afford the supplies, resources, and help needed to provide high-quality care. By investing more in the FCC workforce, providers expressed being able to translate those financial increases into improvements in the care experienced by children.

Subsequently, survey respondents recommended that the state **ease restrictions and increase the number of children** an FCC can have in their care at one time, and to **provide state-sponsored health benefits**, among others, to child care workers. These sentiments are illustrated in the quotes below.

“Allow to have more kids so we can grow our business.”

“Continue subsidy pay by enrollment, not attendance, increase FCC subsidy rates to match center-based care (a tiered scale would be a good way to pay according to skill and quality of program), increase FCC ratios to eight children, provide benefits like health insurance and retirement.”

“Medical insurance and retirement for providers and that the subsidy be higher; our work is very valuable but very poorly paid” (translated from Spanish).

“We, the home providers, do not have any type of benefit, retirement plan, medical insurance, unemployment, or disability; in addition we earn very little and, therefore, we cannot pay for the necessary help of any assistant, who can be paid, with dignity, since we ourselves do not earn well and it would help us a lot to increase the number of children that we can take care of in New Jersey to be able to earn more and not only pay other employees, also, to have ourselves and our families a better quality of life” (translated from Spanish).

The suggestion to increase the number of children was intertwined with the recommendation to increase FCC providers’ pay and the subsidy rate per child. FCC providers felt that they could be more competitively compensated if they were allowed to care for more children. More nuanced suggestions, such as differentiating between the number of children in care by age group and considering space accommodations and the presence of an assistant, were also included in the survey data. As evidenced above, FCC providers made strong recommendations about increasing access to and the availability of health benefits and retirement plans for the FCC workforce. FCC providers expressed the importance of these benefits to their well-being, which is interlaced with their ability to provide care and continue working in the child care field. Relatedly, FCC providers also expressed how access to these key benefits, as well as increased pay, would signify their importance and value within the child care ecosystem, a fact that is often overlooked and not regarded with respect. In this vein, FCC providers expressed wanting greater acknowledgement that their work is valuable and seen, as illustrated in better pay, the ability to care for more children and earn more money, and having benefits for their health and financial well-being.

These three recommendations are potential avenues for consideration as the state sets its priorities and investments to increase the supply of child care workers and child care availability. The recommendations from FCC providers in this survey speak to key issues in home-based care that have long persisted for this workforce. New Jersey could consider different mechanisms by which these recommendations could be piloted and/or operationalized to increase the attractiveness of working in home-based child care, a key service underpinning many communities across the state.

DISCUSSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This research offers findings that speak to the motivations, challenges, considerations, and recommendations of FCC providers in New Jersey. The four topic areas highlighted in this report tell a complex narrative of a workforce driven by its love of children and satisfied with its work, but also experiencing challenges with compensation, benefits, and communicating a need for more resources and training. FCC providers also reported experiencing complex challenges associated with managing day-to-day operations, planning, staying in business, and making ends meet. These findings offer key

considerations for the state in its program and policy approach to attracting individuals to become FCC providers, as well as retaining current FCC providers. Below, the research team discusses **three** distinct areas for consideration and investment based on the survey findings.

First, FCC providers expressed wanting to participate in additional training opportunities; however, they also cited issues with the accessibility, affordability, and availability of current training offerings. FCC providers specifically cited a need for training to care for children with special needs. This is a key area of improvement and investment that could be addressed by the state, working in collaboration with CCR&R agencies, educational institutions, and other child care-focused entities in New Jersey. By amplifying awareness of current offerings, diversifying and increasing available training opportunities, and reducing barriers to participation, FCC providers could engage in meaningful educational opportunities to support the care they can provide to children. Barriers to participation could be addressed by the state and relevant child care sector stakeholders by offering subsidized training opportunities, ensuring training is offered in multiple languages, and working with training providers to offer evening and weekend programming.

Second, the survey analysis highlights a difference in satisfaction levels and career intentions between new and established FCC providers. Providers who entered the child care workforce during the COVID-19 pandemic era (new providers) expressed less interest in leaving the child care field, as compared to established FCC providers, but also communicated much greater interest in working in a licensed child care center and, to a lesser extent, a public school. This research suggests a need for program and policy intervention to address the career supports and pathways available to FCC providers, as evidenced by the sentiments captured from survey respondents who have four or fewer years of experience working as an FCC provider. The state can consider expanding supportive resources and career pathways for FCC providers to continue their education and training and encourage the linkages between FCC and employment in licensed child care centers. This investment to link workforce development pipelines and pathways across child care settings offers another avenue by which to recruit teachers and expand the pipeline of workers entering the child care field at large. In this way, New Jersey could consider the creation of a more robust workforce pipeline and the development of career pathways across child care settings to recruit and retain the child care workforce in both FCC and licensed centers.

Third, FCC providers' displeasure with their pay and access to benefits is a prevailing theme that emerged across topic areas, including their identified challenges to remaining an FCC provider, reasons for seeking new employment, considerations about their work environment, and recommendations for improvements. FCC providers' recommendations to increase the number of children allowed in their care are also interlinked with their displeasure about their pay. To ensure FCC providers remain in the child care workforce and to attract individuals to become FCC providers, policymakers should investigate possible interventions to more competitively compensate FCC providers and increase their access to critical benefits such as health care and retirement accounts.

FCC providers report an unsustainable working environment — particularly for those who are the head of their household — with their current rates of compensation.

The three areas for improvement and investment outlined above offer different avenues by which to address the voiced needs, challenges, and concerns of the FCC provider workforce in New Jersey. While the research team offers these three recommendations, future analyses could further investigate the workforce dynamics of FCC providers across different areas of interest and at different points in time.

L I M I T A T I O N S

While the survey offers ample insights into the FCC provider workforce in New Jersey, the research team acknowledges the study's limitations. The survey's sample is a non-probability convenience sample; therefore, the survey responses are not representative of the FCC provider population in New Jersey. The survey findings represent the population of FCC providers who participated in the survey. The relatively small sample size also makes bivariate statistical testing somewhat challenging. Another key consideration of this research is that the data presented in this report are derived from a cross-sectional survey, meaning that they capture FCC providers' sentiments at a single point in time. The cross-sectional survey cannot speak to differences in sentiments over time. Furthermore, this research may not capture unobservable individual characteristics that drive decision-making and may account for individuals' perceptions, attitudes, and more, which may be oversimplified in the survey data.

C O N C L U S I O N A N D N E X T S T E P S

This research highlights a segment of the child care workforce that has long been understudied, yet plays a critical role in the provision of child care in New Jersey. FCC providers support children and families in their respective communities, underpinning working parents' labor force participation. While FCC providers report deriving immense satisfaction from their work caring for children, this research also highlights a workforce that encounters challenges with day-to-day operations, making ends meet, and having the resources and knowledge to provide high-quality care for the children and families they serve. This research adds to the growing body of knowledge on the FCC provider workforce in the state, particularly highlighting who they are within their communities, detailing the characteristics of their work, calling attention to their challenges, and identifying their perceived needs for additional support. The findings from this study offer insights into the ways in which the state can address the challenges and needs reported by this workforce, particularly identified hindrances to remaining a child care provider and offering high-quality child care. Key policy considerations include an expansion or increased awareness of educational and training opportunities, the development of a more robust workforce pipeline, and interventions

to increase compensation and access to benefits. As efforts are underway to build up the capacity of FCC providers in the state, this research offers potential pathways for additional support and investment to aid in the recruitment and retention of the FCC workforce. The Heldrich Center's FCC workforce study is a first step in highlighting the workforce dynamics and key considerations for the recruitment, retention, and expansion of FCCs in New Jersey.

The Heldrich Center will continue to conduct its evaluation of the New Jersey child care workforce and will next examine the perspectives of individuals working in licensed child care centers across the state. The Heldrich Center deployed a survey to teachers and assistants working in licensed child care centers in November 2024. To expand and add insights into the quantitative survey findings, the Heldrich Center conducted focus groups with individuals who participated in the FCC and licensed center staff surveys. Finally, the research team is working on a wage and workforce analysis using administrative data from the New Jersey Statewide Data System to understand the changing dynamics of workforce size, composition, retention, and wages. Through these multiple research methods, this research broadly seeks to identify ways the state can reduce barriers to entry to the child care workforce and improve retention of qualified, skilled workers. Working in conjunction with the Center for Women and Work and the National Institute for Early Education Research, the Heldrich Center will offer a set of policy recommendations for the state to consider to improve the supply, preparedness, quality, and working conditions of New Jersey child care workers, inclusive of FCC providers and those working in licensed child care centers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors thank Brittney Donovan, Lillian McFarland, María Belén Conde Oviedo, and Sharon Ryan, Ed.D for their contributions in designing, collecting, and analyzing the data.



The [Heldrich Center for Workforce Development](#) is devoted to transforming the workforce development system at the local, state, and federal levels. The center provides an independent source of analysis for reform and innovation in policymaking and employs cutting-edge research and evaluation methods to identify best practices in workforce development, education, and employment policy. It is also engaged in significant partnerships with the private sector, workforce organizations, and educational institutions to design effective education and training programs. It is deeply committed to assisting job seekers and workers attain the information, education, and skills training they need to move up the economic ladder.

Appendix A: Family Child Care Provider Survey Instrument

Introduction

1. Are you a registered family child care provider in New Jersey, or not?
A registered family child care provider is an individual who is registered under the rules of the Family Child Care Provider Registration Act and serves no more than five children at any one time.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. How many years of experience do you personally have working with children under age 5?
Please do not count any experience raising your own children.
 - a. 0 to 99 years
3. For how many years have you been a registered family child care provider in New Jersey?
 - a. 0 to 99 years
4. Please indicate the primary age group that you work with as a family child care provider.
If you work with more than one age group, select the primary age group that you work with in an average week.
 - a. Infants (0 to 18 months)
 - b. Toddlers (18 to 30 months)
 - c. 2.5- to 4-year-olds (30 to 48 months)
 - d. 4- to 5-year-olds (48 to 60 months)
 - e. School-age (5 to 18 years old)
5. How many children are currently enrolled in your registered family child care business?
 - a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 4
 - e. 5
 - f. Other
6. Do you currently offer the following type of care? Check all that apply.
 - a. Morning hour care
 - b. Evening hour care
 - c. Overnight care
 - d. Weekend care
 - e. I do not offer care outside of traditional business hours

7. Please indicate if you do, or don't do, any of the following in your family child care business:
- a. Accept income-eligible children who receive the Child Care Subsidy from the Department of Social Services
 - b. Provide discount when caring for more than one child from the same family (sibling discount)
 - c. Offer sliding fee (fee that is flexible according to the parent's income)
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
8. Are you a member of a professional association focused on caring for children? Check all that apply.
- a. ZERO TO THREE
 - b. New Jersey Association for the Education of Young Children (NJAEYC)
 - c. New Jersey Family Child Care Providers Association (NJFCCPA)
 - d. National Institute on Out of School Time (NOIST)
 - e. Other (please specify)
 - f. I'm not sure
 - g. No, I am not a member of a professional association focused on caring for children
9. Are you a member of a union? Check all that apply.
- a. Communications Workers of America (CWA)
 - b. American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
 - c. Other (please specify)
 - d. I'm not sure
 - e. No, I am not a member of a union
10. Is your child care business accredited by the National Association of Family Child Care Providers, or not?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know

Job Motivation and Satisfaction

Next, we would like to know more about your motivations for entering and working in child care, as well as how you feel about continuing to work in the child care field.

11. Thinking about your time as a student in secondary school or other schooling, would you say working with young children and/or working as a care provider was a professional goal of yours, or not?
- a. Yes, professional goal
 - b. No, not a professional goal

12. Which of the following reasons, if any, describe why you currently work with young children? Please choose and rank three by dragging and dropping them into the box.
- a. It is my career or profession
 - b. It is a step toward a related career
 - c. It is my personal calling
 - d. It is a job with a paycheck
 - e. It is work I can do while my own children are young
 - f. It is a way to help children
 - g. It is a way to help parents
13. What led you to become a registered family child care provider? Please describe in two or three sentences.
14. When it comes to how you feel about your job, do the following statements describe you a lot, a little, or not at all?
- a. I am happy with my job
 - b. I am excited to start working every day
 - c. My job is fulfilling to me
 - d. My job gives me personal satisfaction
 - e. I think I have an important job
 - i. Describes me a lot
 - ii. Describes me a little
 - iii. Does not describe me at all
15. Overall, how satisfied are you with your job?
- a. Extremely satisfied
 - b. Somewhat satisfied
 - c. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 - d. Somewhat dissatisfied
 - e. Not at all satisfied
16. In the past 12 months, how would you say your overall satisfaction with your job has changed? Compared to 12 months ago...
- a. I am more satisfied with my job
 - b. I am less satisfied with my job
 - c. My satisfaction has stayed the same
17. Which of the following factors have the biggest positive impact on your level of satisfaction with your job? Please choose and rank three by dragging and dropping them into the box.
- a. Pay
 - b. Benefits (like health insurance and retirement)
 - c. The number of children in my care
 - d. The ability to work from my home
 - e. Not having to report to someone and/or being my own boss

- f. Personal reward/fulfillment
 - g. Connection/impact with children
 - h. Opportunities for learning and growth in child development
 - i. Opportunities to teach the way I want to
 - j. Access to resources (e.g., teaching materials) to be able to do my job effectively
 - k. Respect from parents
 - l. Respect for the profession (feeling valued as a teacher/caregiver)
 - m. Other (please specify)
18. Which of the following factors have the biggest negative impact on your level of satisfaction with your job? Please choose and rank three by dragging and dropping them into the box.
- a. Pay
 - b. Benefits (like health insurance and retirement)
 - c. The number of children in my care
 - d. The ability to work from my home
 - e. Not having to report to someone and/or being my own boss
 - f. Personal reward/fulfillment
 - g. Connection/impact with children
 - h. Opportunities for learning and growth in child development
 - i. Opportunities to teach the way I want to
 - j. Access to resources (e.g., teaching materials) to be able to do my job effectively
 - k. Respect from parents
 - l. Respect for the profession (feeling valued as a teacher/caregiver)
 - m. Other (please specify)
19. Thinking about some things that may or may not describe how you feel about your current work...Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.
- a. I am paid fairly for my work
 - b. I am underpaid for my work
 - c. Pay is important to me
 - d. I would leave my current job and take another child care job if it paid more money
 - e. I would leave the child care field for another job that paid more money in a different field
 - f. I do not make enough money at my job to financially support myself and/or my family
 - g. I need a second job and/or income to continue to work in child care
 - h. I could not work in child care if I did not have financial support from a family member
 - i. Strongly agree
 - ii. Agree
 - iii. Neither agree nor disagree
 - iv. Disagree
 - v. Strongly disagree
20. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
- a. The rate that I receive for subsidized child care seems fair
 - b. I have the financial resources I need to run my family child care business
 - c. I can always make ends meet from running my family child care business

- d. I need financial assistance with running my family child care business
 - i. Strongly agree
 - ii. Agree
 - iii. Neither agree nor disagree
 - iv. Disagree
 - v. Strongly disagree
- 21. Do you plan on continuing to work as a registered family child care provider in the next six months to one year?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Not sure
- 22. If you were to look for a new child care job, what are the main reasons why? Check all that apply.
 - a. To find a second job in addition to running my family child care business current job
 - b. To find a job that pays more
 - c. To find a job with better benefits/insurance
 - d. To find a job that offers more work hours
 - e. To find a job with more stable hours
 - f. To find a job in a new location because I am moving/relocating
 - g. Worried that my current job may end
 - h. Hope to reduce commute or improve schedule
 - i. To find improved working conditions
 - j. To see what else is available
 - k. To find summer employment
 - l. To have more flexibility to support my family
 - m. To find a job for professional growth and/or advancement within the field of early care and education
 - n. To find a job that is a better fit with my training/experience within the field of child care
 - o. Other (please specify)
- 23. How interested are you in leaving the child care field?
 - a. Extremely interested
 - b. Very interested
 - c. Moderately interested
 - d. Slightly interested
 - e. Not at all interested

Block Work Environment

In the next section, we would like to get a better understanding of your day-to-day work arrangement. Questions will ask about your current work environment, how much time you spend on certain tasks, how you handle challenging situations, and what supports are available to you.

24. On average, how many hours per week do you spend on activities to manage the administration of your family child care business, such as paperwork?
- 0 hours per week
 - 1 to 2 hours per week
 - 3 to 4 hours per week
 - 4 to 8 hours per week
 - More than 8 hours per week
25. Do you currently, or have you in the past, served any children who you felt had special needs but did not have a diagnosis?
- Yes
 - No
 - Not sure
26. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statement.
“In general, when I have a child in my care who I suspect may have a disability or special need, parents have been receptive to my concerns.”
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - N/A
27. What are the most challenging issues in appropriately accommodating children with special needs? (please check all that apply)
- Not enough staff for necessary supervision
 - Difficulties including children with special needs in all activities
 - Disruptions to other children
 - Administering medications
 - Lack of training
 - Child provided with assistance (e.g., interpreter, one-on-one aide) but not for full day that child is in my care
 - Other (please specify)
 - I’m not sure
 - Does not apply
28. Please identify and rank the three biggest challenges you face in your work. Please choose and rank three of them by dragging and dropping them into the box.
- Working with kids with special needs
 - Working with parents
 - Child to caregiver ratios
 - A lack of resources to support my family child care business
 - Fear of making a mistake or a decision that others may view as a mistake

- f. Developing children's activities
 - g. Lesson planning/curricula development
 - h. Dedicated time in the workday to plan curriculum and do paperwork
 - i. Dedicated space for me to be able to plan my workday
 - j. Feeling underappreciated and undervalued
 - k. Being able to take time off
29. When it comes to you and your work, would you say the following things are a major challenge, a minor challenge, or not a challenge at all?
- a. Having/finding child care for your own children
 - b. Balancing work and personal life
 - c. Finding time in the workday to plan curriculum and do paperwork
 - d. Finding time for personal care and well-being
 - e. Finding time to pursue education and training for myself
 - f. Managing the administration of my family child care business
 - i. Major challenge
 - ii. Minor challenge
 - iii. Not a challenge at all
 - iv. N/A
30. In an average month, how often, if ever, do the following things happen to you?
- a. Parents came late to pick up their children
 - b. Parents blamed their child's bad behavior on the program
 - c. There were children with behavioral problems that were hard to deal with
 - d. I worked with children whom I did not feel I had the training for
 - e. I knew the children were happy with me
 - f. There were major sources of stress in the children's lives that I couldn't do anything about
 - g. Parents spoke with me about challenges unrelated to child care
 - h. I knew that I was appreciated by the parents
 - i. Never
 - ii. Once
 - iii. More than once
 - iv. Weekly
 - v. Very often
31. On a scale of 1 (not at all true) to 6 (completely true), how do you assess yourself on the following statements:
- a. I can remain calm when facing difficulties in my job because I can rely on my abilities
 - b. When I am confronted with a problem in my job, I can usually find several solutions
 - c. Whatever comes my way in my job, I can usually handle it
 - d. My past experiences in my job have prepared me well for my occupational future
 - e. I meet the goals that I set for myself in my job
 - f. I feel prepared for most of the demands in my job

32. Would you say you feel supported by your local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R), or not?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Not sure
33. What kind of support have you received from your local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R), if any?

Career Path

Next, we would like to know about your future work plans, interest in getting more education and training to work with children, and/or run your business.

34. Thinking about your work/career in the future, if you were offered a job, would you be interested in working in a licensed child care center, or not?
- a. Yes
 - b. Depends
 - c. No (please specify why not _____)
35. Are you actively pursuing a teaching certificate to teach in the public schools (e.g., a P-3 or K-6 certificate)?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
36. If you were offered a job in the public school system in New Jersey, would you leave your current job as a family child care provider to take it?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Depends
37. (If Yes or Depends to Q37) What would impact your decision to leave your current position for a job in the public school system? Check all that apply.
- a. Better pay
 - b. Better working conditions (i.e., better hours)
 - c. More status and respect
 - d. Other (please specify)
 - e. Don't know

38. What is your highest level of education?
- a. 9th to 12th grade (no high school diploma)
 - b. GED or high school equivalency
 - c. High school graduate
 - d. Some college credit, but no degree
 - e. Associate degree (two-year degree)
 - f. Bachelor's degree (four-year degree)
 - g. Graduate or professional degree
39. Are you currently enrolled in a degree program at a college or university?
- a. Yes, associate degree
 - b. Yes, bachelor's degree
 - c. Yes, graduate degree
 - d. Yes, other
 - e. No
40. Do you plan on getting another degree?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know
41. (If Yes to Q39) Are you majoring or specializing in any of the following areas? Check all that apply.
- a. Elementary education
 - b. Special education
 - c. Child development, psychology, or family studies
 - d. Early childhood education
 - e. Other (please specify)
42. Do you believe additional training and/or certifications would positively benefit you in your work, or not?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know
43. When thinking about training, which topics are most relevant to you and your work? Please choose and rank three by dragging and dropping them into the box.
- a. Working with children with special needs
 - b. Working with children with behavioral issues
 - c. Culturally responsive practices
 - d. Child development
 - e. Working with multilingual learners
 - f. Planning learning activities
 - g. Running a small business
 - h. Other (please specify)

44. When working with children with special needs, in what areas would you most like to receive additional specialized training? Check all that apply.
- a. Administering medications
 - b. Special needs in general
 - c. Specific disabilities
 - d. Behavioral issues
 - e. Performing routine special health procedures (e.g., intubation, catheterization, nebulizer)
 - f. Inclusion
 - g. Communication with parents surrounding special needs
 - h. Other (please specify)
 - i. None of the above
45. In the past 12 months, have you done any of the following to improve your skills or gain new skills in working with children, or not?
- a. Participated in any workshops, for example, those offered by professional associations, resource and referral networks, etc.
 - b. Participated in coaching, mentoring, or ongoing consultation with a specialist
 - c. Attended a meeting of a professional organization such as ZERO TO THREE, National Association for Education of Young Children, Association for Family Child Care, National After School Association, or another group
 - d. Enrolled in a course at a community college or four-year college or university relevant to your work with children
 - e. Other (please specify)
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
46. On average, how many hours a month do you spend on activities to improve your skills or gain new skills in working with children?
- a. 0 hours per month
 - b. 1 to 2 hours per month
 - c. 3 to 5 hours per month
 - d. 5 to 10 hours per month
 - e. More than 10 hours per month
47. The last time you participated in an activity to improve your skills working with children, did you do so to fulfill a requirement, or not? Requirements might include needing continuing education credits for a certificate/credential and/or licensing.
- a. Yes
 - b. No

48. What barriers prevent you from accessing training or learning opportunities on topics that would most interest and benefit you? Check all that apply.
- a. Cost of training
 - b. Availability of training
 - c. Lack of openings in training
 - d. Time of training is not convenient
 - e. Availability of technology resources
 - f. My job is too demanding
 - g. Location of training
 - h. Online training is not available
 - i. Level of training content does not match experience level
 - j. Personal barriers, such as lack of child care for my children, lack of transportation, etc.
 - k. My family demands make engaging in training difficult
 - l. Training is not available in my primary language
 - m. Other (please specify)
 - n. None of the above
49. When thinking about furthering your education in early childhood education or getting a certification, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
- a. I am interested in going back to school to further my education in the early childhood field or to get a certification
 - b. It would cost too much to further my education in the early childhood field or to get a certification
 - c. I don't have enough spare time to further my education in the early childhood field or to get a certification
 - d. I don't know where to go to further my education in the early childhood field or to get a certification
 - e. It is not worth the time and effort to further my education in the early childhood field or to get a certification; the salary increase would be too small
 - i. Strongly agree
 - ii. Agree
 - iii. Neither agree nor disagree
 - iv. Disagree
 - v. Strongly disagree

Final Thoughts

Next, we would like to know what you think New Jersey should prioritize to improve the child care field.

50. What do you think policymakers should prioritize to improve the working conditions for child care workers in New Jersey?

Demographics

Just a few more questions for classification purposes only.

51. What is your birth year?
 - a. 2024 to 1924

52. What is your race?
 - a. American Indian or Alaska Native
 - b. Asian
 - c. Black or African American
 - d. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - e. White
 - f. Two or more races
 - g. Other (please specify)
 - h. Don't wish to specify

53. What is your ethnicity?
 - a. Hispanic or Latino
 - b. Not Hispanic or Latino
 - c. Don't wish to specify

54. What is your gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Other (please specify)
 - d. Don't wish to specify

55. What county do you live in? (dropdown)
 - a. Atlantic County
 - b. Bergen County
 - c. Burlington County
 - d. Camden County
 - e. Cape May County
 - f. Cumberland County
 - g. Essex County
 - h. Gloucester County
 - i. Hudson County
 - j. Hunterdon County
 - k. Mercer County
 - l. Middlesex County
 - m. Monmouth County
 - n. Morris County

- o. Ocean County
- p. Passaic County
- q. Salem County
- r. Somerset County
- s. Sussex County
- t. Union County
- u. Warren County

56. Thinking about the following benefits, please indicate whether you have each benefit and how you receive it.
- a. Health insurance
 - b. Life insurance
 - c. Dental insurance
 - d. Vision insurance
 - e. Flexible spending account (FSA)
 - f. Health savings account (HSA)
 - g. Retirement account (401(k), etc.)
 - h. Discounted or free child care slot(s)
 - i. Complimentary meals
 - j. Other (please specify)
 - i. Yes, paid by the family child care business
 - ii. Yes, through another source
 - iii. No, I do not have this
57. Do you currently receive financial or in-kind assistance from any of the following government programs, or not?
- a. WorkFirst NJ (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and General Assistance (GA))
 - b. Cash assistance for disabilities
 - c. Housing assistance
 - d. Free or reduced-price lunch for your children
 - e. Food assistance (SNAP, Food Stamps)
 - f. Child care subsidy/New Jersey Cares for Kids (NJCK)
 - g. Medical insurance
 - h. WIC (Women, Infants, and Children)
 - i. Other (please specify)
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
58. Do you have a second job for which you receive income, or not?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

59. Are you the head of your household? This means are you the primary person who financially provides for a family.
- a. Yes
 - b. No
60. How many total people — adults and children — currently live in your household, including yourself?
- a. 1 to 30
61. Approximately what was your total household income in 2023, before taxes or deductions? It may be difficult to remember the exact amount, so an approximation is fine. Please include income from wages and salaries earned by you and other adults in your household. Also include government assistance, gifts, or other income you may have had.
- a. Less than \$25,000
 - b. \$25,000 to \$34,999
 - c. \$35,000 to \$49,999
 - d. \$50,000 to \$74,999
 - e. \$75,000 to \$99,999
 - f. \$100,000 to \$149,999
 - g. \$150,000 and above

Appendix B: Family Child Care Registration Procedures in New Jersey

Registration Procedure	Summary of Registration Procedure	Associated Cost
1. Create New Jersey Child Care Information System (NJCCIS) account	The creation of an NJCCIS account is necessary for submitting an application, registering for all required training, and applying for grants. Caregivers will also be provided with their local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) information, which will provide support throughout each step of the registration process.	N/A
2. Find a substitute	Each applicant is required to have a substitute that shall replace them in providing care in the case of illness and/or scheduling conflicts. All substitutes must be age 18+ and must also submit their own NJCCIS account registration, meeting the same requirements as the primary provider.	N/A
3. Submit an application	Once an applicant creates their NJCCIS account, they will be required to submit the registration application. This application is located on the NJCCIS website and each applicant can utilize their CCR&R for any questions or support.	\$25 application fee
4. Complete orientation	The local CCR&R, which is experienced in the registration process, will provide a two-hour orientation to all applicants and provide all pertinent information regarding preparation and the execution of the registration process. This shall also serve as an opportunity for applicants to ask any pressing questions or seek additional support for the remaining steps to registration.	Free
5. Complete comprehensive background check	All child care providers and staff (including administrative personnel, janitorial staff, volunteers, and bus drivers) who are 18 and older must complete the comprehensive background check. Any individual who resides within the registered family child care home and is age 18+ must also complete the background check. This background check will include the Criminal History Record Information fingerprint check, the State and National Sex Offender registry check, and the Child Abuse Record Information check. Staff who are age 14+ must also complete the Child Abuse Record Information check.	Free
6. Complete pre-service health and safety training	The applicant is required to complete various pre-service health and safety training. Training will include New Jersey health and safety basics, such as safe learning environments, transportation safety, handling and storage of dangerous materials, how to navigate emergency situations, and safe sleep practices. There may also be other topics covered during this training. They will also be trained to identify child abuse and neglect, as well as when and how to report it. Training shall also include infant and child first aid and CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation). Eventually, providers will also be expected to complete in-service training to maintain their registration.	Varying prices
7. Create policies and procedures	Family child care providers are required to adhere to the policies and procedures set forth in the manual of requirements. Providers are also required to have an emergency preparedness plan that addresses many components in the manual, including requirements for children with special needs.	N/A
8. Home inspection	The county CCR&R agency will conduct an initial home inspection prior to issuing the certificate of registration to ensure there are no health and safety concerns nor imminent hazards. Family child care providers are then monitored annually unannounced. Inspections include both program and life safety components such as observing age-appropriate activities and checking for hazards throughout the home.	Free

Source: New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Family Development (2022).

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